

Preparation Instructional Leadership PreK-12 Licensure Program Standards

Partnership Agreement

Ensuring that all schools have effective leadership begins with the principal selection and preparation process (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007). Tennessee educational leaders are currently selected and prepared primarily at the university level. The process must be a dynamic collaborative effort between universities and the local education agencies (LEAs) they serve. It is critical that universities and LEAs work together to identify and secure candidates for instructional leadership based upon local needs identified using student achievement data and emerging research about the dispositions and characteristics of exemplary school leaders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Bottoms, O'Neill, 2001). To ensure collaboration LEA-university partnerships must be formalized and contain the following:

Required

- The partnership agreement must be written and signed by both LEA and university administrators.
- The partnership agreement will define how the partners will:
 - a) create a shared vision and program design
 - b) meet the leadership needs of the LEA;
 - c) support selected candidates; and
 - d) carry out high-quality field experiences.
- The partnership agreement implementation must be an identified priority in both organizations, as reflected in their mission, structures, regular practices and budgets.
- The partnership agreement will describe how leadership preparation programs and LEA partners will jointly establish and implement criteria and processes for screening and selecting promising candidates who demonstrate:

- a) expertise in curriculum and instruction,
 - b) expertise in leadership, and
 - c) have a track record of improving student achievement.
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- The partnership agreement will describe how screening criteria and selection processes will be continually monitored, evaluated and improved.
 - The partnership agreement will describe the membership, responsibilities and communication plans of the preparation program design teams and the partnership advisory councils.
 - The partnership agreement will describe how the specific leadership requirements of the LEA will be addressed.
 - The partnership agreement will identify a pool of resources available to provide candidates the support and conditions necessary to succeed in the leadership program. Resources may include but are not limited to: release time for course work and field experiences, tuition assistance, mentor stipends, learning materials and extra coaching as needed to master essential competencies (Fry, O'Neill, & Bottoms, 2006).

Candidate Selection

Process

Identifying and selecting high performers for leadership training is a daunting task for universities and LEAs to manage. Candidate selection must be rigorous. Recruitment and selection of program candidates should help address targeted district hiring needs related to candidate experience, demographics, and projected leadership openings. LEAs and their preparation program partners must describe and implement a selection process that includes:

Required:

- How a set of criteria that conveys a clear description of the characteristics of applicants will be collaboratively developed.
- How the components of the selection process will be determined:

- a) application procedures and timelines;
 - b) screening and evaluation procedures, including interview protocols, 360-degree evaluations, performance portfolios or other documentation formats, in-basket exercises, writing samples, scoring rubrics, etc.; and
 - c)) the district's and participants' obligations to each other.
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- How information about selection criteria, application process, evaluation components, district/participant obligations, and required forms will be prepared and disseminate to all teachers and professional staff in the school districts, as well as any other groups of professionals who may be considered for the pool.
 - How screening and evaluation committees members from university faculty, LEAs, and exemplary practitioners will be selected
 - How consistent, ethical and fair selection practices will be established and monitored
 - How agreed-upon reliable procedures for analyzing candidate data from multiple measures will be assed

Recommended:

- Conduct informational meetings with school faculties and other groups of potential applicants.
- Publish information about the selection of the leadership pool in the LEAs communication media, and keep all employees informed.

Criteria

Approved instructional leadership preparation programs will require that all candidate applicants hold a current teacher* license and a minimum of three (3) years of successful education working experience and submit a confidential application portfolio that contains the following:

Required:

- Copy of the most recent performance appraisal.
- Current professional development plan.
- Evidence of ability to improve student achievement and also demonstrated leadership in coaching other teachers to raise student achievement. *
- Evidence of knowledge about curriculum, instruction and assessment. *
- A personal statement of career goals and how the preparation program would assist the candidate in reaching stated goals.
- A letter from a director of schools, if possible, indicating the candidate would receive field-based support during the program.
- Letter(s) of recommendation from principals and/or a supervisor. Each local superintendent or designee, in collaboration with university departments, will establish requirements for recommendations.
- Evidence that describes qualities of collaboration, cooperation and relationship building.
- Demonstration of effective oral and written communications skills.
- Successful completion of an interview conducted by a program admission committee that includes both P-12 instructional leaders and higher education faculty that can determine if the candidate has:
 - a) Implemented innovative learning strategies in their classrooms
 - b) Shown good communications, human relations, and organizational skills
 - c) Used student data and work samples to make instructional decisions
 - d) Demonstrated high ethical standards

Recommended:

- Challenged students through rigorous, standards-based teaching.
- Integrated technology into daily teaching
- Worked collaboratively on teaching/learning issues with teaching teams
- Analyzed research and applied it to practice
- Demonstrated leadership in the larger community
- Demonstrated the ability to articulate and implement a vision
- Shown commitment to continuous improvement

- Evidence of leadership and management potential, including evidence of most recent accomplishments in the area of instructional leadership. *
- Joint screening by university and school system leaders with assessment tools..
- Observations and videos of classroom and peer teaching.

** The evidence or documentation shall be developed collaboratively between districts and university departments.*

Preparation Curriculum

Critical success factors associated with instructional leaders who have succeeded in raising student achievement in schools have been identified. These factors, organized under three overarching competencies, should be the minimum driving force for university preparation program redesign (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001).

The Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) align with these critical success factors.

Competency I: Effective principals have a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement through focusing on student achievement; developing a culture of high expectations; and designing a standards-based instructional system.

Competency II: Effective principals have the ability to work with teachers and others to design and implement continuous student improvement through creating a caring environment; implementing data-based improvement; communicating; and involving parents.

Competency III: Effective principals have the ability to provide the necessary support for staff to implement data-driven school, curriculum, and instructional practices through initiating and managing change; understanding the change process and using leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively; providing effective professional development; using time and resources in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school

improvement; maximizing resources; acquiring and using resources wisely; building external support; and staying current with effective practices.

University instructional leadership preparation program must develop a comprehensive and coherent standards based curriculum that is aligned with the TILS, NCATE/ECCL, ISSLC, (see Appendix A) and state accountability and evaluation requirements.

Curriculum and program philosophy must emphasize leadership of instruction and leading school improvement. Curriculum instruction must integrate theory and practice and stimulate reflection. Instructional strategies include but are not limited to problem-based learning; action research; field-based projects; journal writing; and portfolios that feature substantial use of feedback and assessment by peers, faculty, and the candidates themselves. LEA personnel must be included in the delivery of instruction to candidates.

Candidates must provide evidence of meeting competencies (a portfolio) at the instructional leadership licensure - beginning (ILL-B) level, complete a practicum project and develop a professional growth plan to earn an advanced degree or a license as an instructional leader.

Practicum (Field based experiences)

Developing the competencies of an effective instructional leader requires more than reading books, engaging in academic discourse, and analyzing key concepts and skills of educational leadership. Becoming a competent leader also requires observing and analyzing a variety of good models of practice and then learning from one's own trial and error in the workplace. Prior to licensure, it is crucial that candidates demonstrate mastery of essential competencies under the watchful eyes of practitioners who know and use effective practices.

Quality field-based experiences must provide opportunities for students to translate professional standards into leadership skills to solve a range of school problems. This could be accomplished through observing, participating in and then

leading teams of teachers in identifying needs, implementing interventions, and evaluating results that focus on improving teaching and learning (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005). In response to this research, it is required that Tennessee preparation program for instructional leadership candidates be redesigned to include the following:

Required:

- Field experiences integrated throughout the entire program and activities aligned with standards and course curricula to provide just-in-time application and learning.
- LEAs and preparation programs collaboratively select the mentors based upon the selection criteria research for identifying exemplary mentors. Candidates' mentors may change during the program based upon the candidates' needs.
- Performance evaluations, conducted during all field experiences.
- Practicum seminars for candidates, conducted throughout the program.
- School-based activities that provide opportunities to apply the knowledge, skills and thought processes of a school leader, as identified in state standards and research on school leadership and incorporated in the preparation program's design.
- Learning experiences along a developmental continuum that progresses from observing (shadowing and other forms of observation) to participating in (being a part of a team, etc.) to leading school-based activities (being in charge of a committee) related to the core responsibilities of school leaders.
- Opportunities to work with diverse students, teachers, parents and communities.
- Handbooks or other guiding materials that clearly define the expectations, processes and schedule of the practicum to participants, faculty supervisors, mentors and district personnel.
- Ongoing supervision by university program faculty who have the expertise and time to provide frequent formative feedback on candidates' performance.

- Mentors who share the program's articulated vision of effective leadership, model the key leadership behaviors and practices aligned with the vision, know how to provide the required activities and guide candidates through them, and shape accountability for bringing candidates' performances to TILS.
- Rigorous formative and summative standards-based evaluations of a candidate's performance of core school leader responsibilities, using valid, reliable and standardized instruments and procedures.
- Candidate defense of a practicum project, based on action research of a real-world school problem to a panel (faculty and LEA representatives and expert external to LEA and university) (Fry et al., 2005).

Program Approval

To ensure a level of quality across all redesigned instructional leadership programs, all redesigned instructional leadership programs must be approved by a team using a process approved by the state board of education. The new evaluation process calls for the visiting team to be in-state evaluators and expert outside expert evaluators.

Process

By January 1, 2010 all instructional leadership participation programs must be approved by the evaluation team before leadership licensure privileges are granted. The program evaluators will include current exemplary instructional leaders, state instructional leadership program director and at least two external experts in instructional leadership redesign.

The evaluators will assess support documents; and conduct a pre visit to provide guidance, identify barriers to progress, provide support and identify promising practices.

ITEMS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL DURING THE PRE-VISIT

- Draft syllabi for required Instructional Leadership Courses
- Draft program checklist
- Draft plan of program organization/administration (course sequences, cohorts, etc.)
- Draft plan for embedded field experiences
- Documents as evidence having implemented the collaborative admission requirements (for candidates admitted to Instructional Leadership no later than spring 2010)
- Draft partnership agreement with LEAs
- Members of Advisory Committee (names and affiliation)
- Members of Admissions Committee (names and affiliation)
- Draft copy of plan for mentor training
- Plan for practicum
- Any other related materials that you wish to share

Note*: Please consider inviting the following people to the pre-visit: dean, leadership faculty, certification officer, and LEA partners. You may add others at your discretion, although we recommend a fairly limited number of participants.

Program evaluation teams will have the responsibility to guide program development, approve and regularly monitor leadership programs. Teams have the authority to withhold or withdraw licensure privileges.

Prior to a program approval evaluation, external evaluators will be provided copies of the support documents to read in advance. In addition, they will be provided copies of the guidelines, state expectations for the redesigned programs, Tennessee Standards for Instructional Leaders, state certification structure, and other documents used by the campuses.

Program evaluation teams will review proposals based upon the state expectations and jointly identify questions to ask during the interviews. Staff from the Tennessee Department of Education will examine all redesigned program paperwork to determine if they meet new requirements regarding program admission and completion. The Department staff will indicate if all instructional leader certification requirements are met. If certification requirements are not met, areas that need to be addressed for program approval will be identified for the team.

The evaluation team will conduct face-to-face interviews with key university administrators, faculty, and school/district partners during a site visit.

Although the Tennessee Standards for Instructional Leaders will be the basis for approval, the team may make suggestions for further program improvement. Based upon information generated by the evaluators, written program reviews will be developed that provide specific feedback from the evaluators about each program. The Program Reviews will contain feedback from the evaluators in the following three areas:

- A. Program Recommendations
 Standards-based recommendations that must be met for program approval
- B. Program Suggestions
 Any suggestions that team might have. These are not binding.

C. Commendations

The final approval process will ensure that campuses have addressed the stipulations of the review team and that high quality programs exist across the state. All programs recommended for approval without stipulations and found to have no program admission or completion problems will be recommended to the State Superintendent of Education to present for approval to the State Board of Education

All universities that have programs that are not recommended for approval will be required to determine if they will or will not continue to pursue program approval. If they decided to pursue program approval, they will be required to have their redesign team continue to meet and make major changes to the instructional leadership proposal as recommended by the review team. Campuses will not be allowed to submit the new proposal until the next evaluation cycle during the following spring or fall and will be required to undergo the full evaluation with the visiting team.

If programs are required to meet stipulations or are found to have certification problems, universities will be required to address the areas cited and submit a program response to the State Department of Education. The State Department of Education will review the response and determined if it fully addresses the stipulations. If the response appears to meet expectations, a program review committee will visit the campus to ensure that the program addresses certification requirements and evaluation stipulations. If the university has addressed the stipulations required by the initial visiting team, its programs will be recommended for approval. If the university fails to address the evaluators' stipulations, campuses will be notified that are not allowed to admit students to instructional leadership programs. Universities may continue to redesign, ask for technical assistance from the State Department of Education and apply for approval in the next approval cycle.

